

African Democracy in Focus

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AFRICAN DEMOCRACY FORUM



BUILDING DEMOCRACY FOR PEACE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA



Mikhaila Cupido Musoni, ADF Coordinator

Africans taking democracy matters into their own hands

I am certain that the various media houses both in Africa and further afield could hardly keep up with what was happening on the continent this month with the sudden resignation of Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn sending the country into a flurry of concerns about ethnic

violence breaking out. Jacob Zuma too is no longer president in South Africa, however he made it perfectly clear that he did not agree with the decision of the ruling ANC to have him step down.

Africa it would seem is riddled with *big man* politics that we cannot shake or can we?

I am of the view that we can – South Africa on Valentine's Day gave credence to that. Yes everything came to a tipping point just then but it had been nine long years of a Jacob Zuma presidency in which time South Africa had to deal with the ridicule of a president who on technicalities got off free of the charges of rape. In his tenure the country could never speak of women's rights, or eradicating gender based violence. Never in that time could women empowerment be promoted or

even adequately addressed not with a president who was the very antecedent of belittling the role of women in South African society.

Despite his song and dance, and his unwavering support from those who benefitted from his presidency there was behind the scenes tireless working on court cases, opinion pieces and peaceful marches by lobby groups, civil society organizations who despite the sometimes dismal look of things carried on creating awareness about the murky politics that had become the order of the day in South Africa. So too I think that Chapter 9 organizations especially the former Public Protector Thuli Madonsela considered the demise of a rather disheartened Jacob Zuma a great victory for democracy and good governance in the country. One should never underestimate the role of

passionate citizenry and dedication to upholding the laws of the land and through that effort holding leaders accountable to the people that they serve and should be on the receiving end of sound forward thinking leadership.

South Africa at present moment in lieu of Valentine's Day has listened to their new president Cyril Ramaphosa speak, he has filled the nation with hope that has been missing for numerous years. And though the ANC can claim the victory of signing off the presidency of Jacob Zuma, it was in fact Civil Society and the will of the people who got them to making that decision. If not for them the charade that was the Zuma regime would have gone on for another 18 months.

Change is possible and imperative on the African continent in the 54-African nations and its people who call the continent home. And it is the obligation for us in civil society and the man on the street at the grass roots level to make sure that leaders are reminded that they serve at the behest of a people. At the risk of making a mockery of the English language and giving in to the whims of the social media age it is imperative that I state that the ousting of a president as we've seen in South Africa and Zimbabwe at the start of 2018 "was did" and as such all of Africa where the population feels that they have a government that is not serving and or meeting their needs "can did it."

At the African Democracy Forum we have been in full swing too in our advocacy of democracy, human rights and good governance. We will be hosting a conference on *Democracy in Africa - The way forward* which will take place in Kigali, Rwanda on 24th and 25th May 2018 alongside Africa Day. We hope that you will participate and share experiences of democratization from around Africa. Please do check out our website and social media pages for more info on the conference.



The Management Committee Members, with members of the ADF Secretariat

Management Committee Meeting, January 2018

The African Democracy Forum held a Management Committee meeting from 25th – 26th January, 2018 at Park Inn Hotel in Kigali, Rwanda. It hosted committee members from across the

continent to chart the way forward for the organization. Members who attend are, Terence Chitapi from Zimbabwe, Jean-Robert Ilunga Numbi from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kingsley Bangwell (secretary) from Nigeria, Djingarey Maiga (Vice-Chairperson) from Mali, Maximilienne C. Ngo Mbe (treasurer) from Cameroun and Dr. Joseph Nkurunziza (chairperson) as well as Mikhaila Cupido Musoni (coordinator) from the Republic of South Africa.

finance sector. Her experience relating communications include writing and editing content for the Kigali Genocide Memorial website and application as well as managing communication for a political party during the 2010 presidential campaign. She's fluent in French, English and Kinyarwanda.



The position of Communications Officer was offered to Gisele Rugwiro.

Gisele Rugwiro is a native of Rwanda. Since moving back from the U.S.A in 2014, she worked in the

More pictures from the Committee Meeting



South Africa: Ready to be democratic again

By Mikhaila Cupido Musoni

NEWS WITHIN AFRICA



Hailemariam Desalegn

What's next for Ethiopia?

As Hailemariam Desalegn, the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia, resigns and becomes the first leader of this country to relinquish power willingly, all eyes are on Ethiopia on what is next and what to expect from the ruling coalition. Things are quickly changing and a state of emergency has been declared and there's popular demand for democracy, the rule of law and political and economic fairness. To find out more, click on the link below and read what author Yohannes Gedamu had to say in his article.

<https://theconversation.com/premier-quitting-and-state-of-emergency-signal-urgent-need-for-reform-in-ethiopia-91966>

More news within Africa

Zimbabwe: Tsvangirai, the longest opposition leader to Robert Mugabe, dies after witnessing the fall of his rival but not long enough to see his legacy live. Click on the link below and read more about his incomplete legacy and how Zimbabweans mourned one of their favorites. <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-02-22-tsvangirai-left-an-incomplete-legacy>

The corrupt reign of Jacob Zuma should serve as a lesson not only to the South African electorate but to the whole of Africa and beyond that it is the responsibility of every citizen to make sure that democracy is alive and well. To read more about the article go here

<http://www.africademocracyforum.org/en/blog/south-africa-ready-be-democratic-again>



Cyril Ramaphosa, newly appointed South African President



Migrant crisis in Libya

Libya: Growing concern as the number of migrants from Libya keeps increasing as well as the uncertainties over the country's future as a functioning state continues to mount. www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-42915867

Mali, Cameroon, South Sudan, among countries that will hold general elections this year, as Africans on the continent at large; have decided democracy is the only way to go. <https://qz.com/1169321/eight-african-2018-elections-to-watch-egypt-sierra-leone-south-sudan-mali-zimbabwe-libya-cameroon-dr-congo/>

Upcoming Events

The African Democracy Forum will be hosting the conference Democracy in Africa – the way forward in Kigali, Rwanda and aim to bring together scholars, civil servants and civil society representatives familiar and expert on democracy in Africa to debate and discuss the state of it. This conference will focus on dealing with the impact, role and importance of democracy in Africa. Looking at a modern Africa, one that is part of “a new world order” joined together with the world “to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind – peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law”. Because the majority of Africans prefer democracy to any kind of government and that there’s a need for it, it is very important that members of different Civil Society organizations gather together and debate on what democracy in Africa is at present and what it should be.

This conference will aim to discuss the following topics:

- The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance – positives, challenges and country involvement.
- The African Union and the challenges faced by democratization in Africa (conflict, terrorism/extremism, the role of religion on African politics).
- The role of women and youth, political parties especially the ones in opposition and the role of Civil Society and their participation in democratic consolidation in Africa.
- The way forward for democracy.

This event will take place on the 24th and 25th of May 2018 and will be in conjunction with Africa Day and will be an opportunity for scholars from different African regions to share their knowledge. We will be sharing updates about this event on our Facebook and Twitter page and welcome any feedback or suggestions regarding what will be addressed during

the conference. Please follow us on these social media platforms for more news updates regarding this and other possible upcoming events.

Please check the website if you want to participate.

<http://www.africademocracyforum.org/en/blog/democracy-africa---way-forward>



EVENT TO LOOK OUT FOR

**African Union Youth Competition**

The African Union Youth competition is an event we are planning for the young bright minds with a chance to win a trip to the AU headquarters. Please follow our Twitter and Facebook account for news and updates on this competition.

**Social Media Links:**

Q & A with the Chairperson



- **Q:** What is your take regarding the current state of democracy in Africa?

⇒ **A:** Democracy is a process. When people hear about democracy, what comes to their mind is either western or eastern democracy. There's a need for people to understand that there can be a democracy that is not necessarily western or eastern but a democracy that responds to the needs of the people. When it comes to Africa, the continent has had issues with having a fully-fledged democracy when it comes to the real principles of democracy mostly because of its history, the context and the realities on the ground. So I would say that the current state of democracy is a work in progress.

- **Q:** As someone with plenty of experience working with non-profit organizations, what are some of the challenges NGOs and CSOs focusing on democracy have faced?

⇒ **A:** The challenges they're facing are that, some African governments view civil societies in a negative way; they think these are western driven institutions are used by western elites to undermine the efforts of the government initiatives across Africa. That's a negative perception and yet civil society organizations are subsets of non-governmental organizations that are for public interest, responding to the needs of people and holding governments accountable where they have not delivered to the expectations of the people. Civil servants/actors need to engage with

governments so that each party can understand and trust each other and also see each other as partners towards working for the improvement of civil liberties.

- **Q:** Why is the African Democracy Forum important and what should they do in relation to those challenges?
 - ⇒ **A:** ADF is important in a way that it a platform for civil society actors and also for civil societies across Africa where they can discuss on emerging issues, issues affecting democracy in Africa as well as human rights issues. It is basically a platform where civil society actors and governments would be discussing about peace process and political governance across Africa. It is also a platform for learning experiences and capacity building for members of different organizations.
- **Q:** Should Africa copy the same democratic system witnessed in Europe, Asia or America? If not, why?
 - ⇒ **A:** One thing people need to know is that democracy is universal. It is structured by culture, history and context of a particular country therefore it is not a matter of copying rather a matter of understanding the democratic principles and values and then making sure that they fit into the context of that particular.
- **Q:** What do you see in terms of progress democracy in Africa?
 - ⇒ **A:** Like I said earlier, democracy in Africa is a work in progress. There has to be awareness among the citizens so that the latter can understand their rights because if they don't, they won't be able to know what their responsibilities as citizens are, they won't be able to hold their governments or leaders accountable. We also need to know and/or remember that leaders are part of a society therefore if the society is not informed, not aware of its rights and democratic values; we are going to have leaders who won't be informed of their civil liberties and rights.

